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Patterson's drug court bill signed into law

LANSING – Legislation allowing the creation of drug treatment courts and juvenile drug treatment courts was signed into law by the governor today, said Sen. Bruce Patterson, R-Canton.

The courts would offer supervised treatment programs for people who abused or were dependent on alcohol or a controlled substance. The program would integrate alcohol and other drug treatment with justice system case handling.

“Creating drug treatment courts is a great addition to our justice system,” said Patterson, sponsor of Senate Bill 1000, now Public Act 226. “Providing necessary treatment to drug users under court supervision ensures they are properly treated and are not a threat to society. Juveniles will especially benefit from this treatment so they can become successful adults.”

People admitted to such programs could not be violent offenders or have a weapons violation. Those admitted would have their criminal histories reviewed and must not be deemed a substantial risk to the public.

Patterson said drug treatments courts also would save taxpayers money. While the cost of housing a prisoner with substance-abuse problems costs between \$20,000 and \$50,000 a year with an additional \$80,000 for building the prison cell, drug court costs run between \$2,500 and \$4,000 per offender annually, according to the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. Additionally, the association reports the recidivism rate for those who complete drug court programs ranges from 4 percent to 29 percent as opposed to 48 percent for regular prisoners.

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